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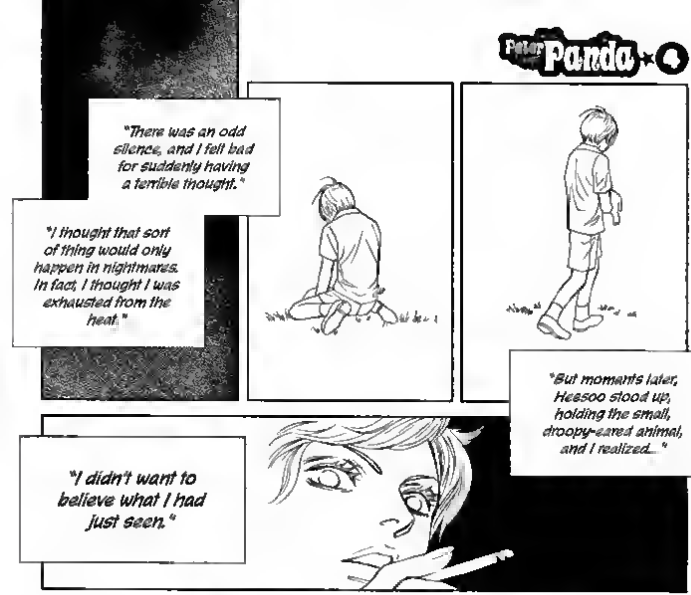
USE RUI?
I CAN'T FORSIVE THAT SORT OF THING EVEN IF IT'S FOR YOU TWO.
DO YOU WANT TO BE SEPARATED FROM HEESOO AGAIN?
THEN,
IF HEESOO GETS DRAGGED AWAY TO LIVE IN THAT HOUSE FOREVER...

...AND YOU'D NEVER BE ABLE TO SEE HIM AGAIN, WOULD YOU BE OK WITH THAT?
NO, NO WAY.
I DON'T WANT TO NOT SEE HEESOO AGAIN. I'D NEVER WANT THAT.
BUT... BUT RUI IS...
NOTHING IS CERTAIN YET. DON'T GET AHEAD OF YOURSELF.
DID ANYONE SAY THAT RUI'LL BE FORCED INTO IT?

IF RUI CHOOSES HEESOO ON HER OWN, SHE'S NOT BEING "USED," RIGHT?
A DEVIL [sic] YOU SAY...
IS THERE A PARTICULAR REASON WHY YOU THINK OF HEESOO IN THAT WAY?
YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE IT, CONSIDERING HOW HYAEWANG AND JABBE ARE NOW,
BUT WHEN THOSE TWO WERE YOUNGER, THEY WERE REALLY INNOCENT AND KIND KIDS WHO NEVER GOT INTO ANY TROUBLE

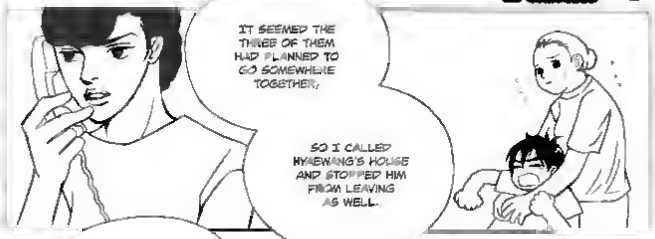
ESPECIALLY JAREE HE WAS REALLY STUBBORN BUT NEVER WITHOUT A GOOD REASON.
RATHER, HE WAS SO MATURE AND GENTLE THAT WHEREVER WE WENT, PEOPLE ENVIED AND PRAISED US
BUT FOR SOME REASON, HEESOO HAD A TIGHT HOLD ON HIM; SO JAREE DID WHATEVER HEESOO WANTED TO DO
THEY CAUSED FIRES, DRANK STOLEN WINE, AND SMOKED STOLEN CIGARETTES
IF THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT, THEY WOULD DENY ANY WRONGDOING; BUT HEESOO WOULD DEFINITELY HAVE BEEN A PART OF IT
I'M SORRY TO SAY, BUT THAT KIND OF BEHAVIOR IS NOT UNCOMMON IN KIDS
EVEN I WAS, AT THAT AGE...
THAT'S NOT THE END OF IT.

"Back then, we had a guest room that overlooked Heesoo's garden."
"One day, after I'd just finished preparing the room for guests, I went out onto the veranda..."
BARK
BARK
"...and saw Heesoo playing with his new puppy."
"Moments later, while holding the puppy close, he kneeled down onto the ground."
BARK
BARK
BARK
WHINE
Whimper
BARK
Whimper


"There was an odd silence, and I felt bad for suddenly having a terrible thought."
"I thought that sort of thing would only happen in nightmares. In fact, I thought I was exhausted from the heat."
"But moments later, Heesoo stood up, holding the small, droopy-eared animal, and I realized..."
"I didn't want to believe what I had just seen."

I FELT SO SCARED AND TERRIFIED THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO TELL ANYBODY ELSE ABOUT IT. AFTERWARD, I TRIED MY BEST
TO STOP THE OTHER CHILDREN FROM PLAYING WITH HEESOO
BUT AT THAT TIME, BUSINESS RELATIONS WITH HIS FAMILY WERE GOOD, SO IT WASN'T EASY
THAT NIGHT, THE CHILDREN CAME HOME, BAWLING THEIR EYES OUT
THAT WAS WHEN I REALIZED WHAT HAPPENED EARLIER THAT AFTERNOON WASN'T JUST A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

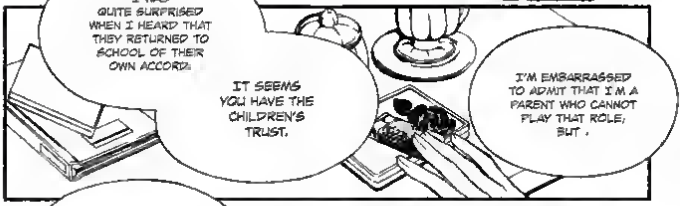
IF I THINK ABOUT IT, THE TROUBLE BEGAN WHEN HEESOO'S FAMILY MOVED TO OUR AREA.
HEESOO'S FAMILY HAD INVESTED A LOT OF MONEY INTO THE BUSINESS THAT WE STARTED TOGETHER WITH HYAEWANG'S FAMILY
WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN CLOSE TO HYAEWANG'S FAMILY;
BUT BEFORE WE KNEW IT, HEESOO BECAME AS CLOSE AS SIBLINGS WITH BOTH OF OUR CHILDREN
ONLY A WHILE LATER DID I LEARN ABOUT THE SORT OF CULT THAT FAMILY WAS IN.
I HAD MY DOUBTS DUE TO THEIR INVESTMENTS IN US, AND BESIDES, IT WASN'T SOMETHING I COULD RESOLVE OVERNIGHT.
BY "ACCIDENT," YOU MEAN THE ONE INVOLVING HEESOO; RIGHT? COULD YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN IN MORE DETAIL?
BUT THEN CAME THE ACCIDENT AND WHEN THEY LEFT THE AREA,
OUR BUSINESS RELATIONS ENDED
THE RAIN WAS POURING HEAVILY THAT DAY
I CAUGHT JABEE SNEAKING OUT WITH HIS LUGGAGE


IT SEEMED THE THREE OF THEM HAD PLANNED TO GO SOMEWHERE TOGETHER.
SO I CALLED HYAEWANG'S HOUSE AND STOPPED HIM FROM LEAVING AS WELL.

BUT ... HEESOO HAD GONE OUT ALONE AND GOT CAUGHT UP IN AN ACCIDENT.
...THE MORE TERRIFYING PART IS...

...THE CHILDREN SECRETLY ESCAPED AT DAWN AND SAW THE SCENE THEMSELVES.
WE WERE RELIEVED THAT AT LEAST TWO OF THEM HAD AVOIDED THE ACCIDENT.
BUT AFTERWARD, JABEE LOOKED AT ME AS IF I WERE THE CRIMINAL. NOTHING HAS CHANGED SINCE THEN.

WHO WOULD LET THEIR CHILDREN LEAVE ON A NIGHT LIKE THAT?
WE THOUGHT THEY WOULD HAVE STOPPED HEESOO FROM LEAVING.
IF YOU CONSIDER THE AFTERMATH FROM IT, WE'RE THE BIGGEST VICTIMS HERE.
BUT TO HEAR JAREE TALK ABOUT HEESOO BY HIMSELF IS SURPRISING.
WE'VE PREVIOUSLY TRIED TO TAKE HIM TO SEVERAL PSYCHOLOGISTS, BUT WHENEVER THE ACCIDENT WAS BROUGHT UP, HIS CONDITION WORSENED; SO IN THE END, WE GAVE UP
THAT'S WHY WE ASKED YOU NOT TO MENTION HIS CHILDHOOD UNLESS HE SAID SOMETHING
RECENTLY, I HAVE BEEN HAVING ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE KIDS ONCE A WEEK.
WE MOSTLY HAVE NORMAL CONVERSATIONS, BUT THEY ARE SLOWLY OPENING THEMSELVES UP TO ME.


I WAS QUITE SURPRISED WHEN I HEARD THAT THEY RETURNED TO SCHOOL OF THEIR OWN ACCORD.
IT SEEMS YOU HAVE THE CHILDREN'S TRUST.
I'M EMBARRASSED TO ADMIT THAT I'M A PARENT WHO CANNOT PLAY THAT ROLE; BUT .

PLEASE HELP ME

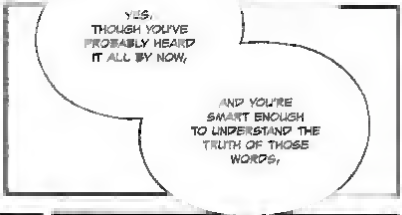
PLEASE LET THE KIDS OUT INTO THE WORLD...

...SO THEY COULD RETURN TO US. .
"Mom! Mom, quickly come down!"

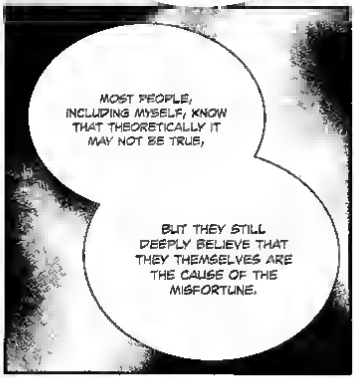
TODAY, COULD WE TALK ABOUT THAT DAY?
THAT DAY WHEN
HEEGOO HAD THAT ACCIDENT.
IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT, WE CAN SLOWLY TALK ABOUT IT LATER
THERE'S NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT IT.
WE JUST PLANNED TO LEAVE WITHOUT LETTING OUR PARENTS KNOW ABOUT IT.

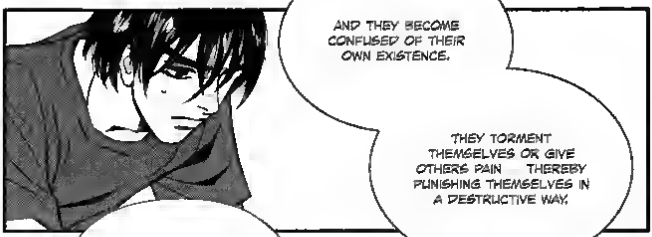
TO GO WHERE?
ANYWHERE.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, IT WAS LIKE A JOURNEY THAT KIDS DREAM ABOUT
ANYHOW, HYAEWANG AND I GOT DELAYED BECAUSE WE WERE CAUGHT,
BUT HEESOO WENT OUT ALONE AND GOT HIMSELF INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT AND WAS BADLY HURT
THERE WAS A LOT OF RAIN, RIGHT?
SO THAT'S WHY HYAEWANG HAS A FIT WHENEVER THERE ARE THUNDERSTORMS.
YOU THINK WE ARE LIKE THIS BECAUSE OF GUILT, DON'T YOU?

IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT. WE DON'T HAVE A GUILTY CONSCIENCE, NOR ARE WE RESENTFUL...
"THE ACCIDENT WASN'T YOUR FAULT OR YOUR PARENTS' FAULT. IT ISN'T ANYONE'S FAULT— JUST AN ACCIDENT THAT UNFORTUNATELY HAPPENED."
...AM I RIGHT?


YES. THOUGH YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD IT ALL BY NOW,
AND YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH OF THOSE WORDS,

UNDERSTANDING IT AND ACCEPTING IT ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS


MOST PEOPLE, INCLUDING MYSELF, KNOW THAT THEORETICALLY IT MAY NOT BE TRUE,
BUT THEY STILL DEEPLY BELIEVE THAT THEY THEMSELVES ARE THE CAUSE OF THE MISFORTUNE.


AND THEY BECOME CONFUSED OF THEIR OWN EXISTENCE.
THEY TORMENT THEMSELVES OR GIVE OTHERS PAIN — THEREBY PUNISHING THEMSELVES IN A DESTRUCTIVE WAY.

HURTING THEMSELVES LIKE THAT MAY SOUND DEPRESSING AND FOOLISH, BUT IT IS A NECESSARY PROCESS
AND WHEN THE BURDEN IS LIFTED, THEY CAN CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PHASE.
IT MAY BE HARD TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING YOU COULD DO BACK THEN...
IT'S THE SAME WITH ANYONE SO YOU MUST LESSEN THAT BURDEN ON YOURSELF AND MOVE ON

FROM WHAT I CAN SEE, YOU AND HYAEWANG HAVE PUNISHED YOURSELVES ENOUGH

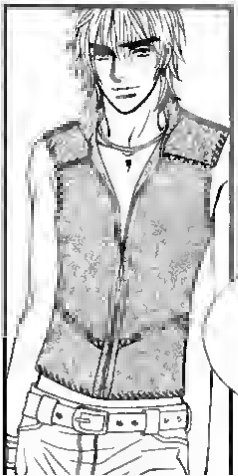
CLASH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, JABEE HAN?
WHAT IS "ENOUGH?" YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW ANYTHING!!
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I PUNISH MYSELF, THE BURDEN'S STILL THERE.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO MOVE ON?!

SHATTER
STOP IT!! JABEE!!
LET GO!
PLEASE DON'T BE LIKE THIS, JABEE HAN!!
LET GO OF ME!

"Hey, Heesoo. Are you sick again?"
"Why are you leaving without saying anything?"
"I said wait!"
AH, SORRY
"Hey, Heesoo ... that..."

HEESOO...

YEAH, TALK.
WHAT IS IT?



I HEARD
FROM JABEE...
ABOUT THE
MARRIAGE.

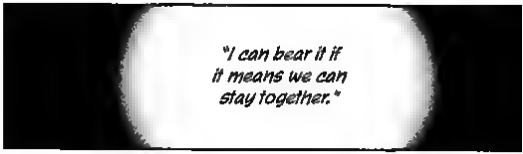
I KNOW THAT'S
THE ONLY WAY
FOR YOU TO STAY
WITH LIS, BUT...

YOU KNOW, HEESOO...
IF YOU DON'T TRULY LIKE HER, THEN DON'T DO THIS TO RUI.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I LIKE RUI
WHEN I'M WITH HER, I FEEL AT EASE AND HAPPY. IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE FELT THIS WAY WITH SOMEONE OTHER THAN YOU GUYS.
...
BUT IS THAT ENOUGH TO MARRY SOMEONE? SO MAYBE, YOU SHOULD...
HYAEWANG, I SEE YOU'VE GROWN INTO A TRUE ROMANTIC.
AHHH

I WAS GETTING A BIT WORRIED BECAUSE YOU SAID YOU WEREN'T INTERESTED IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH WOMEN.
BUT THIS IS GOOD. I'M RELIEVED
MY KIND AND FRIENDLY HYAEWANG WHO NEVER CHANGES~ HOW I DO ADORE YOU
BUT YOU KNOW, HYAEWANG, I WANT TO BE FREE.
AND I THINK YOU TWO SHOULD BE, TOO.
...HEESOO?

"What's that?!"
"Did someone do that?!"
"...The older guys said they hated me."
"But they still need me if they want to inherit the house. So they said they'll harass me but not enough to kill me."
"No way! I'm going to tell Mom!"
"She'll definitely help!"
"You can't. I'll probably be taken far away then. And I won't be able to see you guys anymore."
"I don't want to be separated from you two, Jabee."

"Only when I'm with you two can I truly smile."


"I can bear it if it means we can stay together."

"Let's run away together... to a place where your family can't ever find us."

"We only need to hide until we become adults... because then, they can't do whatever they like to us."

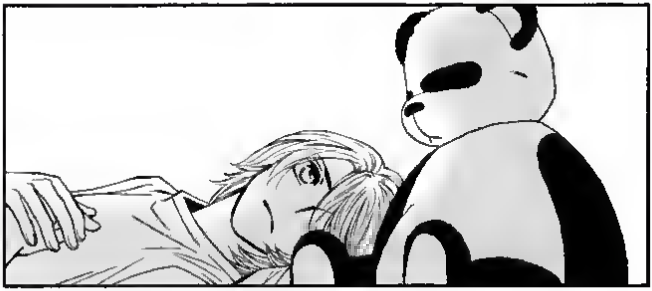
"What?! You guys! What are you planning without me?"
"Where are you going to go? Where, where?"
"A trip around the world!"
"We're going together."
"Wherever it is. Until whenever..."
"Together forever..."

IN THE END I DIDN'T TELL ANYBODY.
EVEN WHEN I CLEARLY KNEW HE WAS BEING USED FOR PROSTITUTION AND TORTURED.
BUT IF I HAD SAID ANYTHING, I MIGHT HAVE BEEN SEPARATED FROM HEESOO. I WAS MERELY AFRAID OF THAT.

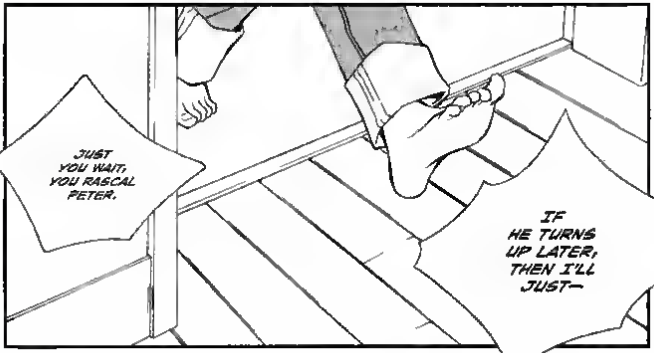
EVEN NOW, AT NIGHT, I SOMETIMES WAKE UP TO CHECK THAT HEESOO IS SLEEPING WELL. AFTERWARD I CAN RELAX... BUT FROM TIME TO TIME, I STILL GET ANXIOUS.
IF HEESOO DIDN'T RETURN,
I MIGHT HAVE KILLED SOMEONE OR COMMITTED SUICIDE...
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE NIGHTMARES ANYMORE.
I THOUGHT IT'D BE FINE BECAUSE WE'RE TOGETHER NOW,
THERE'S *STILL* SOMETHING *INSIDE* HERE.
BUT NO MATTER HOW I LOOK AT IT, IT'S GLOOMY AND DARK BEYOND COMPREHENSION...

I CAN'T FORGIVE MYSELF FOR NOT SAYING ANYTHING JUST BECAUSE I WANTED TO GIVE HEESOO HIS FREEDOM
ALL BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO BE SEPARATED FROM HIM.
AND WHEN I THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH PAIN HE SUFFERED AFTERWARD,
I FEEL THAT I HAVE DONE MUCH WORSE THAN THE PEOPLE WHO ABUSED HEESOO.
IF I HAD ASKED FOR HELP BACK THEN, THAT ACCIDENT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED...
IF IT WAS LIKE THAT, HEESOO WOULDN'T HAVE COME LOOKING FOR YOU.
THAT'S NOT TRUE. THAT'S DEFINITELY NOT TRUE. YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

If God really exists, I want to ask him.
"Who has the power to erase the terrifying nightmares that these kids experience, through no fault of their own?"
"Who can take away their cruel burdens?"
"Become my new family."



SIT
UP


JUST YOU WAIT, YOU RASCAL PETER.
IF HE TURNS UP LATER, THEN I'LL JUST—

OH, MY GOD!
RUI, YOU'RE FINALLY AWAKE!
WHAT THE! WHY'RE YOU CROUCHING IN FRONT OF THE DOOR?! YOU SCARED ME!
I WAS LONELY